Be Proficient, Not Deficient

A Vegetarian’s guide to stopping deficiencies before they start!

Thinking about becoming vegetarian? The benefits from cutting out meat are endless but you need more than just vegetables to get all your essential nutrients. Although most vegetarians think receiving adequate protein is the main challenge, missing vitamins and minerals is the real concern. Here are a few to watch when following a vegetarian diet.

| Zinc: Zinc helps your immune system fight bacteria and viruses. Fill your plate with beans, nuts, shellfish, and dairy which may help prevent you from getting a cold before your next big event. |
| Protein: Getting enough protein as a vegetarian is a lot easier than you’d think. The recommendation for protein is 46 g/day for women and 56 g/day for men. Just 1 cup of cooked lentils has 18 grams of protein. Try to concentrate on other nutrients that are more likely to be inadequate. |
| Vitamin B12: B12 plays an essential role in red blood cell formation and oxygen delivery. Vegetarian sources of B12 include eggs, dairy, fortified cereals, soymilk, and veggie burgers. |
| Calcium: Calcium is essential for college-aged women as bones are only formed until age 30. After that, you cannot form new bones, only maintain them. Stock up on calcium rich foods such as Greek yogurt, cottage cheese, and of course, all types of milk. |

Next time you’re in the dining hall keep an eye out for these vegetarian dishes:

- Black bean burgers
- Tofu and vegetable stir fry
- Vegetarian chili
- Vegetable lo mein
- Made to order omelets
- Samosas

Kale me, maybe?

References:
Dietary Reference Intakes (DRIs): Recommended Dietary Allowances and Adequate Intakes, Total Water and Macronutrients. Available at http://iom.nationalacademies.org/~media/Files/Activity%20Files/Nutrition/DRIs%5_Summary%20Table%20Tables%201-4.pdf. Accessed on 9 October 2015.

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